

THE COUNCIL

26 January 2023

MINUTES

Present: Alastair Da Costa (Chair), Liz Barber, Professor Simone Buitendijk, Tom Clark¹, Bethan Corner, Seb Elsworth, Helen Grantham, Lauren Huxley, Professor Peter Jimack, Professor Simon Kelley, Iain Moffatt, Dr Yvette Oade¹, Professor Alice O'Grady, Dr Cordelia Rogerson, Ken Sargison, Janet Sheriff, Tim Smith and Simon Thompson.

In attendance: Alison Blackburn, Rachel Brealey, Fridey Cordingley Professor Jeff Grabill, Jane Madeley, Professor Nick Plant, Jennifer Sewel, Professor Hai-Sui Yu and Catherine Cho (Minutes); and *for the business set out in CLMM 22/195-199*, Haryati Mohammed, Emily Tabern, Ella Williams and Vicky Zhuo.

Apologies: Dr Kendi Guantai, Leyla Okhai, Maria Papageorgiou and Dr Rachel Tsang.

22/180 **Congratulations**

On behalf of the Council, the Chair congratulated Dr Yvette Oade who had been awarded a CBE in the New Year Honours for services to women in the NHS.

22/181 **Formal declarations of interest**

Received:

- a. from Simon Thompson in connection with the paper CL/22/36 given that he worked in IT Services;
- b. from Helen Grantham in respect of paper CL/22/47 as she was a director on the board of the corporate trustee of the University's Pension and Assurance Scheme (PAS).

22/182 **Minutes**

CONFIRMED:

- a. the Minutes of the meeting held on 24 November 2022;
- b. the notes of the Away Day held on 14 November 2022 subject to correcting that Simon Thompson had sent his apologies for the meeting.

22/183 **Vice-Chancellor's report (CL/22/34)**

Received: a written report from the Vice-Chancellor (CL/22/34), which updated members on matters of higher education policy and reported on issues of interest to the life and work of the University, and which was supplemented by an oral update.

Noted:

- a. that the Office for Students (OfS) had identified as its priorities for 2023 addressing poor quality educational provision, ensuring that students from all backgrounds can access and succeed at university, and supporting freedom of speech in higher education;
- b. that the University and College Union (UCU) had called on its members to take part in 18 days of national strike action during February and March, and confirmed that it planned to re-ballot its members for further strike action later in the year;

¹ Via MS Teams.

- c. that media reports appeared to suggest the Government was considering new rules which would restrict the ability of UK universities to recruit international students which, if accurate, the University would strongly oppose. Leeds was an international, cosmopolitan institution which welcomed students from around the world. Moreover, the significant economic, social, intellectual and cultural benefits that international students brought to the UK were clear;
- d. that the University should position itself to ensure focus on its strengths and good work, in addition to remaining vigilant of its compliance obligations;
- e. the successful launch of the Knowledge Equity Network (KEN) in November 2022, during which the University emphasised the vital importance of working together in research and research-led education to meet the United Nation's Sustainable Development Goals and tackle the world's most difficult and urgent challenges;
- f. that the University had welcomed a delegation led by the Governor of Osaka to reaffirm the University's links with Japan and its commitment to a more sustainable future;
- g. that Dr Nimesh Mistry and Dr Stephen Gorman in the School of Chemistry had been awarded a Horizons in Education Prize by the Royal Society of Chemistry. Council extended its congratulations to Dr Mistry and Dr Gorman on receiving the coveted accolade, which honoured their work helping students "think more like scientists".

22/184 The University's approach to addressing the impact of industrial action on student education (CL/22/35)

CLM 22/184 is confidential to members of the Council only.

22/185 Digital Libraries infrastructure (CL/22/36)

Considered: a paper (CL/22/36) which set out the business case for the Digital Libraries Infrastructure (DLI) to improve search, access and use of the University's digital rare and unique items (Cultural Collections) to enhance learning, research and collaboration.

Noted:

- a. that the project was part of the portfolio of initiatives identified as priorities within the overall Digital Transformation Programme;
- b. that the proposed investment was for £4.4m over the next five years, with an initial drawdown of £2.2m and a further request for £2.2m in 2024/25;
- c. that over the past ten years the digital part of the Library's offer had been neglected . Leeds had significantly fallen behind many other universities and libraries, to a level where a foundational rebuild of its digital infrastructure was required;
- d. that the rethink of its digital infrastructure was required to avoid becoming obsolete in an increasingly digital world, to advance its digital capabilities, to attract relevant research funding and deliver high-quality teaching for the institution;
- e. that the DLI would be critical for success of the University's research income and impact goals (especially in relation to the KEN with enabling global access) as well as for aspects of Curriculum Redefined;
- f. that the business case and associated costs had been worked on with and verified by two external partners, Accenture and Digirati; and there had been consultation with Bodleian Libraries, University of Cambridge Libraries, and Wellcome Collection;
- g. that stakeholders (staff and students) had been engaged by way of testimonials and development of user stories;
- h. that the business case had been reviewed and endorsed by the Digital Transformation Programme Board, Transformation Office Portfolio Board, Operational Executive Group (OEG), University Executive Group (UEG) and Strategy and Investment Committee (SIC);
- i. that the SIC had been of the view that it was a clear cut case for strategic investment.

APPROVED: the business case for the Digital Libraries Infrastructure and initial drawdown request, along the lines set out in CL/22/36.

22/186 **Leodis residential accommodation lease renewal (CL/22/37)**

CLM 22/186 is confidential to members of the Council only.

22/187 **KPIs progress report (CL/22/38)**

Received: a report (CL/22/38) on progress with implementation of the University strategy.

Noted:

- a. that the paper provided information on the mature Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) and underpinning component measures, showing current performance against the targets agreed by Council in July 2022;
- b. that the paper provided, for information, an update on the developing KPIs and underpinning component measures, the intended use of the KPIs at faculty level through the Integrated Planning Exercise (IPE), and a progress update on the implementation of the strategy management tool;
- c. that the report had been considered in detail by the SIC earlier that month.

Leeds University Union

22/188 **Annual Report and Accounts 2021-22 (CL/22/39 (a))**

Considered: in accordance with the requirements of the Code of Practice for the LUU (the Code), the Annual Report and Accounts of the University Union for 2021-22 (CL/22/39 (a)).

Noted:

- a. that LUU had delivered a surplus of £53k (against a deficit of £187k in 2020-21);
- b. that the results were considered positive after the challenging period in the previous year when the severe impact from the Covid-19 pandemic was felt and the start of the current year was unpredictable;
- c. that overall the LUU's balance sheet had remained adequate in terms of free reserves and cash position, following the additional injection of funds from the University and reduced capital expenditure in the year to protect reserves.

22/189 **Report from the Appointed Officer (CL/22/39 (b))**

Received: the annual report (CL/22/39 (b)) from the Appointed Officer under the Code (the University Legal Adviser).

Noted:

- a. that overall the Appointed Officer had no significant concerns with regard to the LUU's compliance with the Code and that it had in place appropriate systems of internal control with ongoing monitoring;
- b. that the Appointed Officer had noted that the LUU reserves and cash position remained positive following significant mitigating actions and financial support provided by the University through the pandemic;
- c. that pressure on LUU's commercial activity and the inflationary impact on the cost base created a significant forecast deficit which the LUU executive was addressing, with the aim of retuning LUU to breakeven across a 2 year period and thereafter achieving a surplus position, and one which the cash and reserves position could bear;
- d. that in the interim there was tight control of expenditure and the University would work with LUU on the matter, through discussions between the University's Chief Financial Officer and Director of Finance and LUU Chief Executive Officer and Finance Director.

Received: a presentation from a number of Executive Officers of the LUU (Bethan Corner, Haryati Mohammed, Emily Tabern, Ella Williams and Vicky Zhuo), primarily in connection with the Union's Impact Report for 2021-22, summarising key achievements and highlights during that period.

Noted:

- a. that the LUU's mission in its current strategic plan was split into three goals: making sure its members felt valued, felt good, and ready for their futures. This was done by promoting and representing their interests, supporting their wellbeing, providing opportunities to meet fellow students and build friendships, and taking part in new experiences to help them shape their futures;
- b. that the LUU championed diversity and took positive action to ensure equal opportunities existed for all students, and the LUU Executive was proud of the relationships it had with the University and the City that enabled it to work together whilst maintaining its independence, which was crucial to allow it to represent students;
- c. that the LUU had a total membership of over 150k across 363 student groups and sports clubs; and had recorded over 507,000 total attendances at LUU events;
- d. that student wellbeing and mental health was tracked by recording participation in NHS Five Ways to Wellbeing activities. These included events and activities centred around wellbeing, sport, volunteering, trips and learning. Although there was a dip in 2020 due to the pandemic, take up of opportunities had increased over the last year;
- e. that the LUU had an average Net Promoter Score rating of +37.75 across LUU services. The Net Promoter Score measured customer experience and scores above 20 were considered 'favourable'. This was a pleasing outcome, especially as many LUU services were closed or operated at a minimum capacity over lockdown;
- f. that over the last 4 years, LUU had provided more than 15,500 student jobs, on and off campus, with over £10m in student salaries;
- g. that over 137,000 learning and volunteering opportunities were taken up, with a good spread of engagement across the international and postgraduate research student communities;
- h. that the LUU had been accredited in the pilot NUS Drug and Alcohol Impact scheme in partnership with the University (which focused on drug harm reduction and a positive culture around alcohol). It had retained the 'Excellent' grade accreditation with SOS-UK's Green Impact Scheme and its Gold award in the Best Bar None scheme (achieving the highest score in the country for any students' union). It had also achieved the Investors In Diversity accreditation;
- i. that, earlier that week, it had been announced that LUU had for the third time in a row gained the 'Excellent' rating in all twelve categories of the Quality Students' Union scheme. It had been the first students' union to gain the 'Excellent' rating when the scheme first started, which measured effectiveness and outcomes within the students' union sector, and scored areas such as strategy, governance, democracy, partnerships, and participation;
- j. that the new LUU strategy 2022-2026 had four aims: fuelling students' passions, creating a fun, celebrated and lively community, and inspiring students you to be their best self. It was an evolution of what LUU had in place and provided a clear articulation of the organisation's purpose;
- k. that the LUU would continue to work with the University to tackle issues that were important to students, such as wellbeing, advice, counselling, climate change, safety, inclusion and allyship, and to keep making a recognisable difference for its current and future students. This was done through LUU executive officers sitting on key University committees and groups. There was also a shift from reactive to preventative work;
- l. that with regard to the LUU's financial position, the role of the LUU's commercial services was to balance the need to achieve a surplus in its operations whilst enabling the organisation to achieve its mission;
- m. that in light of changes to students' patterns and preferences since the pandemic and the cost of living pressures, consideration was being given to ways to increase

footfall within the LUU building and to provide attractive offers that were important to students. LUU was also tracking the effectiveness of its 'return to building' policy on staff and students;

- n. that there was a real sense of partnership working between the University and LUU that went beyond the 'Leeds Partnership', which played a key role in ensuring the student voice was heard in respect of their overall educational experience;
- o. that the Council thanked the student officers for their illuminating presentation and commended LUU's work and achievements, especially in such challenging times.

22/191 **Access and Student Success Strategy Update (CL/22/40)**

Considered: a paper (CL/22/40) which outlined progress against the Access and Student Success strategy, summarised the relationship with related strategies, performance against targets and actions that had been implemented to bring about change. It also outlined intended next steps to accelerate momentum for change.

Noted:

- a. that, despite the challenges of the last couple of years, there had been positive progress both in terms of outcomes and the actions that were required to accelerate the trajectory of the Strategy;
- b. the importance of the diversity of student data and qualitative evidence to achieve set targets;
- c. that the University's strategy to implement systemic changes was the correct approach, albeit challenging to effect;
- d. the significant cost of living pressures on students and the increasing impact on their learning;
- e. the need to address the disproportionate knock-on impact of the industrial action and the Covid-19 pandemic on vulnerable and at-risk students, by taking a hard look at the University's rules for progression;
- f. the importance of EDI initiatives to increase the visibility, opportunities and pathways for colleagues across the University, and to increase diversity across staff recruitment practice.

22/192 **First Quarter Forecast (CL/22/41)**

CLM 22/192 is confidential to members of the Council only.

22/193 **Senate (18 January 2023)**

Received: the Minutes of the meeting of the Senate on 18 January 2023.

Noted:

- a. that Senate had undertaken a detailed consideration of the University's approach to addressing the impact of industrial action on student education;
- b. that the Senate had endorsed the direction of travel of the University's Teaching Excellence Framework submission;
- c. that the Senate had received details of the new Export Controls Policy, which set out how to meet legislative requirements designed to restrict the export and communication of sensitive technology or strategic goods, to support the identification of restricted activities and ensure compliance, proportionately with the legislation;
- d. that the Senate had received an update on the latest recruitment outcomes for 2022 entry, together with undergraduate applications through UCAS for 2023 entry.

Noted in respect of reports received by the Senate from its Boards:

- e. that University Executive Group had approved the University's EDI implementation plan; the Faculty of Social Sciences strategy and vision; a new Export Controls Policy; and the fees for the two-year online MSc in Disability Studies programme in the Faculty of Social Sciences and an inflationary supplement in the approach to setting minimum fees for 2024 entry. In addition, the Group had endorsed the

direction of travel on implementing the approach to fixed term contracts; the University's emerging approach to institutional business continuity management; and plans for the content and launch of the staff engagement survey. It had also noted the revised University Expenses Policy;

- f. that Taught Student Education Board had endorsed the approach and agreed position on the Leeds Curriculum; the portfolio development plans as set out within the Curriculum Redefined dashboard; and the approach to flagging OfS Outcomes risk areas, including monitoring and follow-up. It had also noted the degree outcome statement providing an overview of the University's classification profile over the last five years, aligned to guidance issued by the University's Standing Committee for Quality Assessment;
- g. that Research and Innovation Board had endorsed the formation of a governance group for oversight of the University's Research Impact and Knowledge Exchange activity;
- h. that Graduate Board had approved the Postgraduate Researcher Proof Reading Policy and Guidance;
- i. that International Strategy Board had supported a proposal for the University to have a presence in Europe through a post-holder based in Brussels subject to its effectiveness being reviewed.

22/194 Report from the Strategy and Investment Committee (CL/22/42)

CLM 22/194 is confidential to members of the Council only.

22/195 Report from the Nominating and Governance Committee (CL/22/43)

Considered a report from the Nominating and Governance Committee (CL/22/43).

Noted:

- a. that the Committee had discussed a refresh of its Terms of Reference better to reflect its governance role and oversight of Council member recruitment exercises, and to highlight more clearly EDI considerations in those exercises;
- b. that consideration had been given to the emerging external landscape and potential issues that might arise in the next 3 to 6 months which could have an impact on University governance;
- c. that good progress had been made on the work to complete the remaining actions arising from the 2021 corporate and academic governance reviews;
- d. that the Committee had reviewed the latest iteration of the Council members' skills and diversity data;
- e. that the Committee had received an update on the process to recruit two new lay members to Council membership; and
- f. that the Committee had endorsed the membership of the Ethics and Values Committee.

22/196 Annual Report of the Remuneration Committee (CL/22/44)

CLM 22/196 is confidential to members of the Council only.

22/197 Membership of the Ethics and Values Committee (CL/22/45)

Received: the membership of the Ethics and Values Committee (as set out in CL/22/45), which had been put forward by the Nominating and Governance Committee.

Noted:

- a. that the first meeting of the Committee would take place early in February;
- b. that the restriction that appointed members be confined to lay persons had been removed to enable the selection from a wider range of candidates;
- c. that careful consideration had been given to the selection of Committee members to ensure the right balance of knowledge and expertise;

- d. that the Committee's operations would be kept under review, and the Committee would be prepared to make changes to its way of working if needed as it evolved and matured.

APPROVED: the membership of the Ethics and Values Committee as set out in CL/22/45.

22/198 **Amendment to the terms of the Cowdray Endowment Fund (CL/22/46)**

CLM 22/198 is confidential to members of the Council only.

22/199 **Report from the Trustee of the University of Leeds Pension and Assurance Scheme (CL/22/47)**

CLMM 22/199-200 are confidential to members of the Council only.

22/200 **Charterhouse Rheumatism Trust Annual Report 2021-22 (CL/22/48)**

Received: the report (CL/22/48) for the year ended 31 July 2022 on the financial position and activity of the Charterhouse Rheumatism Trust, a charity of which the University is Corporate Trustee.

22/201 **Treasury report (CL/22/49)**

Received: a paper (CL/22/49) setting out the University's approach to treasury management during the year ended 31 December 2022, commenting on treasury performance and endowment management during that period.

22/202 **Matters for report (CL/22/50)**

Received: a paper (CL/22/50) setting out a number of matters for report including those summarised below.

Noted:

- a. that the Council recorded its great sorrow at the deaths which were reported in CL/22/50.1;
- b. that warm congratulations were offered to the recipients of honours and distinctions reported in CL/22/50.2;
- c. the details of recent professorial and senior appointments, as set out in CL/22/50.3-4;
- d. that, upon recommendation of the Commercialisation Advisory Group, action had been taken on behalf of the Council to approve a number of loans from the University's Enterprise Fund to support four spinout companies in anticipation of the completion of proposed investment by Northern Gritstone Investment Company or other parties.

APPROVED: the uses to which the Common Seal had been put since the last meeting of the Council, as detailed in CL/22/50.8.